

## **AMENDED CLAIMS**

Claims 1-22 (Cancelled).

23.(New) A rotatable link assembly comprising;

a pipe having a rim including a pair of diametrically opposed slotted openings therein, the slotted openings defining a pair of opposed deformable rim portions,

a pair of rim mounting fittings, each fitting having a longitudinal bore passing therethrough, each of the rim mounting fittings being fixed to a corresponding deformable rim portion,

a rotatable link having a longitudinal bore, disposed between the first and second rim mounting fittings, the fitting longitudinal bores and rotatable link bore being in coaxial alignment, the rotatable link being rotatable relative to the rim mounting fittings fixed to the deformable rim portions,

a threaded attachment means extending through said coaxial fitting and rotatable link longitudinal bores for assembling the rim mounting fittings and the rotatable link into a unit, mounted to the deformable rim portions which are deformed thereby, the deformed rim portions providing a mechanical tension which is transferred as compressive forces in the longitudinal direction of the attachment means to the rim mounting fittings which frictionally engage the rotatable link disposed therebetween, the rotatable link having an axis of rotation along the longitudinal axis of the threaded attachment means, such that tightening or loosening the threaded attachment means varies the deformation of the rim portions and adjusts the compressive and frictional forces exerted on the rotatable link to adjust the ease of rotating the rotatable link.

24. (New) The rotatable link assembly according to claim 23 further comprising:

one or more pairs of washers, each respective washer of each pair of washers being disposed on a respective side of the rotatable link between the rotatable link and the rim mounting fittings, the attachment means extending through holes in the washers.

25. (New) The rotatable link assembly according to claim 24 wherein one or more pairs of the washers are spring washers.

26. (New) The rotatable link assembly of claim 24 wherein two or more pairs of washers are provided.

27. (New) The rotatable link assembly according to claim 24 wherein two or more pairs of washers are provided, and at least one pair of washers are spring washers.

28. (New) The rotatable link assembly according to claims 24 wherein the washers are made of a material selected from the group consisting of plastics, metals, brass and steel.

29. (New) The rotatable link assembly according to claim 23 further comprising a plate secured on the rotatable link, such that the plate is rotatable together with the rotatable link, the amount of compressive force exerted on the rotatable link affecting the force required to adjust a position of the plate.

30. (New) The rotatable link assembly according to claim 29 further comprising a handle secured to the plate.

31. (New) The rotatable link assembly according to claim 29 further comprising a support, said pipe being mounted to said support, a longitudinal direction of the pipe being essentially parallel to a longitudinal direction of the support.

32. (New) A method of manufacturing a rotatable link assembly comprising:  
assembling a unit consisting of two rim mounting fittings, each having a longitudinal bore, a rotatable link disposed between the rim mounting fittings, the rotatable link having a longitudinal bore, a threaded attachment means passing through the rim mounting fitting longitudinal bores and the rotatable link bore for assembling the

rim mounting fittings and the rotatable link together, the rotatable link being rotatable relative to the rim mounting fittings;

securing the unit within a pair of diametrically opposed slotted openings provided in a rim of a pipe, by fixing the rim mounting fittings to a pair of opposed deformable rim portions surrounding the openings, the deformable rim portions being deformed thereby for providing a mechanical tension which is transferred as compressive forces to the rim mounting fittings which engage the rotatable link disposed therebetween, thereby applying a frictional force to the rotatable link, and,

tightening or loosening the threaded attachment means for adjusting the compressive and frictional forces exerted on the rotatable link to adjust the ease of rotating the rotatable link.

33. (New) The method according to claim 32 further comprising providing one or more pairs of washers, each washer of each pair of washers disposed on a respective side of the rotatable link, between the rotatable link and the rim mounting fittings, the threaded attachment means extending through holes in each washer.

34. (New) The method according to claim 33 wherein one or more pairs of the washers are spring washers.